





NEAR EAST SOUTH ASIA
CENTER FOR STRATEGIC STUDIES

ANNUAL REVIEW 2018

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS.
ENHANCING SECURITY

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ABOUT NESA

The NESA Center

Established in 2000 when the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) recognized the need for an organization dedicated to the challenging region extending from North Africa across the Arabian Peninsula and into South Asia, the NESA Center today is the preeminent DOD institution for building relationships with and understanding the NESA region. Based at the National Defense University, the NESA Center supports the theater security cooperation efforts of the U.S. combatant commands, U.S. Central Command (USCENTCOM), U.S. Africa Command (USAFRICOM), U.S. European Command (USEUCOM), and U.S. Indo-Pacific Command (USPACOM). NESA is one of five regional centers under the Defense Security Cooperation Agency. NESA organizes conferences, seminars, workshops, and Track II diplomatic efforts, with an alumni network consisting of almost 9,000 security professionals from 120 nations.

NESA LEADERSHIP



LTG (ret.) Terry Wolff
Director

Lieutenant General (ret.) Terry Wolff joined the NESA Center after serving as the Director of Strategic Plans and Policy, J-5 for the Joint Staff from 2011 - 2013, and as a Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for Iraq and Afghanistan on the National Security Council. Director Wolff also currently serves as the Deputy Special Presidential Envoy for the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL. He retired from the military in 2014 after 34 years of service.



David Lamm
Deputy Director

David Lamm became NESA's Deputy Director in 2010 following previous command and staff positions including serving as the Joint Staff's Chief of Plans and Operations (Operations Directorate), as Commander in U.S. Army Central Command, as Chief of Staff of Combined Forces Command, and as Director for Afghanistan at the Defense Policy Analysis Office in the Office of the Secretary of Defense. He is a Distinguished Military Graduate of Canisius College and was commissioned in 1977.



Dr. Roger Kangas
Academic Dean

Dr. Roger Kangas is the Academic Dean and a Professor of Central Asian Studies at NESA. He teaches at Georgetown University's Center for Eurasian, Russian and East European Studies, and was previously a Professor of Central Asian Studies at the George C. Marshall Center for European Security and Deputy Director of the Central Asian Institute at Johns Hopkins' School of Advanced International Studies. Dr. Kangas has advised the Combatant Commands, NATO/ISAF, USAID, and other government entities on Central Asia issues.

DIRECTOR'S NOTE



The NESACenter is thankful for the support given by in-region partners, U.S. Government stakeholders, alumni, U.S. embassies, and U.S. allies for providing invaluable assistance for the continuity of NESACenter programs. With their efforts, foreign policy communities around the world are better equipped to provide answers and analysis towards tough security challenges impacting our world.

This year the NESACenter was successful in completing 27 resident programs with participants from 120 countries resulting in over 860 new alumni—with the addition of numerous topical seminars and meetings—and the engagement of nearly 9,000 participants. The NESACenter has the unique ability to use the collaborative interests and knowledge of regional Combatant Commands and U.S. military organizations including U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM), U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM), U.S. Pacific Command (PACOM), U.S. Army Central (ARCENT), and the Joint Staff, in order to render a specialized set of 22 programs, that address specific regionally sensitive security and defense issues.

Beyond the NESACenter's specialized regional and topical courses, the Executive and Senior Executive Seminars employ broad multi-lateral engagement to provide the most collaborative space for policymakers to hash out security strategy and cultivate relationships. Through the NESACenter's whole-of-society approach, alumni are prepared to develop policy recommendations within their governments, non-governmental agencies, think-tanks, and communities, consistent with mutual goals and objectives.

The NESACenter's unique ability to navigate through unofficial channels and conduct Track II strategic dialogues makes it an excellent resource for international policymakers to provide and present analysis. NESACenter programs in coordination with the University of California at Los Angeles, the University of Ottawa, the Middle East Institute, and the International Institute for Strategic Studies cover strategic international challenges such as the Arab-Israeli Peace Discussions, the U.S.-Iran Nuclear Dialogue, South Asian Regional Security, Middle East-North Africa Security, the India-Pakistan Nuclear Settlement, and the India-Pakistan Military to Military Relationship.

The NESACenter is proud to work with US Central Command, US Africa Command, in-region partners, as well as our expansive alumni network, to catalyze whole-of-government approaches addressing key issues like returning jihadi fighters, countering violent extremism, border security, and critical socio-political and humanitarian situations in the NESACenter region. The NESACenter's unique programs and Track II diplomacy forums provide a crucial and much-needed collaborative space for US and NESACenter policymakers to engage on key issues, while NESACenter's 'Future Leaders' seminars cultivate ideas from rising change makers and allow them to present solutions to complex topics to US policymakers. Throughout FY18, NESACenter program participants presented to National Defense University senior leaders, the State Department's Office for Countering Violent Extremism, the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for the Middle East, as well as members of Congress and staff within the Committees on Foreign Relations, Homeland Security, and Intelligence for the U.S. Senate.

LTG (ret.) Terry Wolff

Director

FLAGSHIP PROGRAMS

COUNTERING TRANSNATIONAL THREATS SENIOR EXECUTIVE SEMINAR

NESA held its signature Countering Transnational Threats Senior Executive Seminar (CT SES) at the National Defense University 5-16 May, 2018. Along with NESA's Executive Seminars, the yearly Senior Executive Seminar is a flagship event in NESA's annual set of 22 specialized programs providing a collaborative forum for policymakers. The CT SES is geared towards senior level officials (at the general officer and minister-ambassador level) from NESA countries, and provides a space for them to discuss geopolitical issues and cultivate relations with each other and the United States.

The theme of NESA's 2018 CT SES was "Cooperating to Succeed". 42 senior officials from 26 NESA countries, as well as the United States, attended the 2018 CT SES led by NESA Professor **Daniel Curfiss**.

The two-week seminar deepened participants' understanding of the region's most pressing transnational security risks, and advanced coherent strategies to combat those risks. Topics included asymmetric warfare, terrorist financing, CT challenges in urban areas, and cyber-terrorism. Professor Curfiss brought in notable CT experts including Ms. Barbara Slavin, Director of the Atlantic Council's Future of Iran Initiative, and Ambassador Wendy Chamberlin, veteran diplomat and current President of the Middle East Institute. In their time in Washington, participants made site-visits to the Supreme Court and the U.S. Capitol for firsthand insights into how the rule of law and separation of powers strengthens national security and defense institutions.



POLICY AND STRATEGY IN WORLD CONFLICTS SENIOR EXECUTIVE SEMINAR

The NESACenter held its bi-annual Senior Executive Seminar (SES) in Washington February 5-9, 2018. The SES is a key component of NESACenter's foundation program series and provides a forum for senior military and government officials from the NESACenter region to interact freely in a closed academic setting regulated by Chatham House rules.

Over 41 participants from 22 NESACenter countries and the U.S. attended the one-week seminar led by NESACenter Professor Dr. **Richard Russell**. The February SES was focused on the theme "Policy and Strategy in World Conflicts", and focused on topics including U.S. foreign policy towards the Middle East, D-ISIS, Iran's regional ambitions, and how to best anticipate future crises and trends.

To shed further light on these critical issues, Dr. Russell convened subject matter experts from the wider D.C. policy community including Dr. Kenneth Pollack, Resident Scholar at American Enterprise Institute ; Dr. Soner Cagaptay, Beyer Family Fellow and Director of the Turkish Research Program at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy; and Dr. Eric Trager, Professional Staff Member for the Middle East and North Africa at the Senate Foreign Relations Committee .



Dr. Kenneth Pollack



THE NEXT ERA OF INNOVATION EXECUTIVE SEMINAR



Across the NESAs region, like much of the world, technology is reshaping civil society, public life, and even democratic processes. NESAs highlighted this critical conversation as the theme of its second Executive Seminar of 2018, “The Next Era of Innovation.” Over 40 participants from 23 NESAs countries as well as the United States attended the two-week Executive Seminar led by NESAs Professor **Brianne Todd**, who oriented coursework towards exploring ways to drive technological innovation and economic growth, in order to catalyze stronger national security institutions and more vibrant societies.

Representative discussion topics included trends in American innovation, cyber and asymmetric threats, artificial intelligence, crypto-currencies, public-private partnerships, entrepreneurship in the NESAs region, and incubating innovation. Professor Todd hosted subject matter experts including Dr. Arthur Daemrich, Director of the Smithsonian Institution’s Center for the Study of Invention and Innovation and Mr. Ben Solomon, Founder of FedTech, to discuss the impact of information technologies and new communications tools on NESAs civil society.

In their time in Washington, participants made site-visits to the U.S. Capitol and the National Museum of American History to learn more about how a culture of innovation enhances national security and defense. At one point in the Seminar, Professor Todd separated participants into breakout groups organized by region (North Africa, South Asia, Central Asia, and the Middle East) and tasked each with identifying how to leverage technology to solve national security issues including those involving migration, refugees, and youth unemployment. Each group successfully submitted their proposals to the Geneva Centre for Security Policy.

WASHINGTON EMBASSY ORIENTATION

From 16-20 October, 2017, NESAC conducted its annual Washington Embassy Orientation Seminar at the Army Navy Club in Washington, D.C. NESAC's annual Washington Embassy Orientation is offered every fall, and despite its typically formal setting, gives newly assigned foreign embassy officials from the NESAC region and regionally adjacent states a chance to meet and comfortably interact with each other, DC-based VIPs in politics and media, and NESAC faculty. As with all other NESAC programs, the Washington Seminar Series uses the Chatham House Rules, which specify a not-for-attribution environment so that participants, faculty, and speakers can freely discuss and collaborate on crucial topics. Roughly 400 diplomats have participated in this flagship NESAC Center program since its establishment in 2009.

Over 30 diplomatic officials from Afghanistan, Algeria, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Yemen, and the wider NESAC region attended the October 2017 Washington Embassy Orientation seminar, led by NESAC Professor **Daniel Curfiss**. The week-long program examined topics fundamental for U.S.-assigned diplomats, like American foreign policy, U.S. government structure, and other topics like the roles of the media, think tanks, and lobbyists in DC's political ecosystem.

Veteran DC policymakers and experts addressed participants, including Philip J. Crowley, former Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs; Kimberly Dozier, CNN intelligence and counterterror analyst; and Michael Singh, Managing Director of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy.



NESA-CENTCOM INTERNATIONAL MILITARY OFFICERS' FORUMS

Although NESA works with all of the United States Combatant Commands, a particularly critical component of NESA's mandate is supporting the theater operations of CENTCOM, U.S. Central Command. NESA runs two iterations of its flagship CENTCOM Military Officers' Forum (IMOF) each FY. The NESA-CENTCOM IMOFs act as major vehicles for facilitating critical discussions of challenges germane to NESA and CENTCOM's mutual Area of Responsibility, and graduate an average of 28-30 officers per course.

In FY18, NESA's two IMOFs were conducted 13-17 November, 2017 and 7-11 May, 2018 at the National Defense University. The November 2017 IMOF focused on the theme "Regional Crises and International Responses", while the May 2018 IMOF explored "Acute Challenges in International Security".

NESA Professor Dr. **Richard Russell** led the November 2017 IMOF, which was attended by 12 U.S. officers and 19 international officers from 16 NESA countries assigned to CENTCOM headquarters in Tampa, Florida. Participants discussed ways forward in Syria; Iran and North Korea's nuclear ambitions; the U.S. Armed Forces' and NATO's most latent challenges in the region; and defeating Al Qaeda and ISIS affiliates.

Dr. Russell invited several notable policy practitioners and academics to speak to attendees, including Dr. Daniel Twining, President of the Republican Institute for Democracy and Ms. Hanin Ghaddar, Fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy.

NESA's May 2018 IMOF, "Acute Challenges in International Security", was also directed by Dr. Russell, and was attended by 29 senior military officers from the U.S. and 19 NESA region countries. Discussion centered on topics from rebuilding in a post-ISIS landscape, Al Qaeda, and a resurgent Iran, to the role played by Congress in U.S. national security decision making. Dr. Russell brought in subject matter experts including CT expert Dr. Daniel Byman, senior fellow at Brookings' Center for Middle East Policy and Professor at Georgetown University, and Dr. Lori Plotkin Boghardt, Fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy.

Participants attended briefings from career legislators on Capitol Hill, including former Congressman the Honorable Jonas Martin Frost, on Congress' role in foreign affairs.

NORTH AFRICA PROGRAMS

RETURNING FIGHTERS AND REINTEGRATION IN NORTH AFRICA AND THE SAHEL

As ISIS terror group continues to lose territory and momentum in Syria and Iraq, and as defections increase from Boko Haram, Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb and Al-Shabaab, North African governments are anxious that returning fighters from Middle Eastern and sub-Saharan battlegrounds could precipitate instability across the region. To address challenges presented by the return of foreign fighters to North Africa, NESAs, in conjunction with AFRICOM, conducted the workshop “Returning Fighters and Reintegration in North Africa and the Sahel” in Tunis, Tunisia 5-9 February, 2018.

The workshop was led by NESAs Professor **Anne Moisan**, who partnered with USAFRICOM’s Mr. Henry Kron, Foreign Affairs Specialist/Security Cooperation Advisor, and was supported by NESAs Program Manager Mr. Fahad Malaikah. The 37 participants included state, civil society, and nonprofit stakeholders from Algeria, Burkina Faso, Chad, Egypt, Libya, Mali, Morocco, Sri Lanka, Tunisia, and the United States. In a confidential environment regulated by the Chatham House rules of non-attribution, attendees discussed and rigorously analyzed national- and local-level initiatives and reintegration programs as implemented in NESAs countries from South Asia, North Africa, and the Sahel, in workshop sessions led by a NESAs or AFRICOM moderator. Other discussion topics included stymying the phenomenon of bedroom radicalization and developing “whole of society” solutions to counterterrorism, leveraging state, civil, and nonprofit actors.



TUNISIAN NATIONAL DEFENSE INSTITUTE SEMINAR

Seven years after the Tunisian Revolution, the first revolution of the Arab Spring, Tunisia is today regarded as the Arab Spring's sole success story, although the country continues to struggle economically.

To address this key challenge facing modern Tunisia, NESAs devoted its seventh annual Tunisian National Defense Institute (NDI) National Security Seminar to exploring "Innovation and Developing a Defense Industry", which focused on developing whole-of-government approaches to spur economic development and a sound investment climate. Specifically, the Seminar explored good governance practices, the importance of rule of law and an anti-corruption regime, public-private partnerships, and innovation.

The Seminar was held in conjunction with AFRICOM at the National Defense University 27 March - 3 April, 2018, and was led by NESAs Professors **Anne Moisan** and **Lawrence Velte**. The Seminar was attended by 45 students of the Tunisian NDI, all also senior officials from 17 Tunisian government and military bodies including the President's Office and the Tunisian Assembly.

Featured guest speakers included USN CAPT Mark Asuncion, Director of AFRICOM's Multi-National Cooperation and Strategic Outreach Center; Mr. Brett R. Schexnider, Deputy Division Chief of AFRICOM's J5 West of West Regional Engagement; Joshua M. Harris, Director of the Office of Maghreb Affairs at the U.S. State Department, and Mr. David A. Lewis, the U.S. State Department's Tunisia Desk Officer.



In their time in Washington, attendees of the Tunisian NDI Seminar attended presentations on U.S.-Tunisia relations at the Tunisian Embassy, as well as a private Embassy reception. Participants also visited Capitol Hill for discussions on

congressional support for robust U.S. ties with a democratic Tunisia, and—in anticipation of the then-upcoming first-ever Tunisian municipal elections—discussed with Alexandria, VA Mayor Allison Siberberg the power of local governance.

SOCIAL MEDIA NARRATIVES AND COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM



From July 31 - 2 August, in Casablanca, Morocco NESAs partnered with AFRICOM to conduct a “Countering Violent Extremism in the Levant and Beyond” Workshop, attended by 48 participants from five North African countries (Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco, and Tunisia), in addition to some Spanish delegates from the think tank European Institute of the Mediterranean. The workshop was directed by Professor **Anne Moisan**, with support from Mr. **Fahad Malaikah**.

The workshop focused on identifying opportunities for collaboration between the diverse range of programs and people engaged in countering violent extremism (CVE), with an emphasis on linking credible counter-narratives with practical delivery of aid. By integrating efforts of government officials, nonprofits, and religious scholars, the program allows for regional governments to powerfully confront drivers of radicalism.

The program convened a diverse range of parties to discuss holistic approaches to CVE and was designed to encourage honest dialogue and innovative solutions utilizing all elements of society. Individuals were encouraged to share best practices and embrace cross border cooperation with counterparts from other NESAs countries. Each session was moderated by a NESAs faculty member and focused on participant speakers in roundtable discussions. Topics included recent developments in CVE research and policy; religious freedom and CVE; youth engagement focused programs, innovation in social media and CVE; and the development of effective counter-messages.

The workshop was enlivened by presentations and panels led by NESAs faculty, AFRICOM personnel, guest speakers, and participants themselves. Speakers and panelists included Dr. Elizabeth Bodine-Baron of RAND; Dr. Itamara Lochard of George Mason University; Mr. Austin Branch of COLSA; and AFRICOM’s COL Jason Wright, Director of Information Operations, J39, and LTC Jeffrey Souter, MISO Planner, J39.

GULF PROGRAMS

UAE COMMAND AND STAFF GENERAL COLLEGE VISIT

NESA Professor David Des Roches facilitated and led a one-week training course for 25 senior officers of the United Arab Emirates Command and General Staff College (UAE CGSC) at National Defense University 11-17 March, 2018. The course focused on U.S. national security organizations and U.S. military strategy, examined the politics and processes advancing U.S. defense policy, and the challenges and opportunities facing the NESAs region (like Kurdistan, Iran's use of hybrid warfare, and reforming NESAs governments).



The guest speaker list featured policy experts including Dr. Denise Natali, the Director of the Institute of National Security Studies' Center for Strategic Research; Ambassador Steven Seche, Executive Vice President of the Arab Gulf States Institute; and Ambassador Adam Ereli, former U.S. Ambassador to

Bahrain. During the seminar, the UAE CGSC officers visited Capitol Hill and Quantico, and engaged in policy discussions with members of the U.S. Joint Staff and the Pentagon's Office of the Secretary of Defense. During the seminar, the UAE CGSC officers visited Capitol Hill and Quantico, and engaged in policy discussions with members of the U.S. Joint Staff and the Pentagon's Office of the Secretary of Defense.

YEMEN TASK FORCE

For over three years, Yemen's bitter and internecine war has killed nearly 10,000 people and pushed millions towards humanitarian disaster and starvation. With support from NESAs partner the Center for Middle East Development (CMED), a think tank based at the University of California, Los Angeles, NESAs convened a sensitive conference in Prague on 19 August, 2018 aimed at beginning a productive dialogue among leading Yemeni stakeholders and leaders about how best to bring about governance and socio-political reconstruction in a post-conflict Yemen.

While in years past NESAs has facilitated numerous larger and more high-visibility Yemen-oriented programs in Yemen and in areas around the world, the August 2018 Yemen Task Force was intentionally small, featuring around 15 attendees, to maximize opportunities for discussion and engagement.

The Yemen Task Force was led by NESAs Professors [Anne Moisan](#) and Dr. [Jennifer Jefferis](#). As the Yemen conflict continues to escalate dramatically, NESAs and UCLA CMED—which regularly hosts confidential meetings for regional leaders and experts on Mid-East issues—aim to conduct the Yemen Task Force bi-yearly.

QATAR DIPLOMATIC INSTITUTE

NESAs Professors Richard Russell, John Wood and Gawdat Bahgat facilitated and taught a weeklong seminar at the Qatari Diplomatic Institute in Doha, Qatar, from 22-28 September. About thirty participants from the Qatari Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Defense, and Ministry of the Interior attended. Professors Russell, Wood, and Bahgat lectured on and led discussions on crucial NESAs-relevant touchpoints including U.S. foreign policy and defense priorities under the Trump Administration, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, energy security, and regional maritime security issues.



IRAQ NATIONAL DEFENSE UNIVERSITY SEMINAR

From 4-14 September 2018, NESAC hosted the Iraq National Defense University Faculty and Student Seminar for faculty, students, and senior-ranking military personnel associated with the Iraq National Defense University (NDU). Over the course of almost two weeks, Iraq NDU faculty and students engaged on both practitioner-oriented and academic topics like U.S. socio-political processes and institutions, U.S. military tradecraft, the practical and pedagogical underpinnings of the American National Defense University, and best practices for interfacing with American academic and governmental institutions.

NESAC Professor [Daniel Curfiss](#) acted as course director, and brought in notable guest speakers including Dr. Michael Bell, chief Middle East Adviser on the National Security Council and Ambassador Marc Grossman, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs. Some of the more notable discussions of the two-week seminar included open and honest conversations analyzing lessons learned from U.S. military presence in Iraq, and the U.S. role in rebuilding Iraqi state institutions.

The seminar featured off-sites at places of interest including the Capitol (where former Congressman Martin Frost engaged participants), and the Middle East Institute, where the Iraqi delegation saw firsthand the role played by think tanks in Washington's political ecosystem. Iraqi Ambassador to the United States Fareed Yasseen also hosted participants and NESAC faculty at an evening reception.

Throughout the seminar, the Iraqi delegation expressed their serious desire for continued cooperation with the United States, especially joint professional military education. This seminar was the first of its kind, and the NESAC Center is privileged to serve as an institutional link between the U.S. and Iraqi militaries, and support their shared objective of securing a prosperous, democratic Iraq.



SAUDI CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP

The NESAC Center hosted approximately 20 officers from the Royal Saudi Arabian Armed Forces War College and Command and General Staff College for a workshop 13–17 August, 2018. The weeklong workshop was dedicated to developing an impactful teaching curriculum for use at the Armed Forces Command and Staff College in Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

The event gave participants unique access to the NESAC Center’s resources and expertise, and lectures were led by NESAC faculty experts Dr. **Daniel Baltrusaitis** and Professor **Richard Wiersema**. The workshop was organized by Professor David Des Roches as part of the Advanced Professional Military Education Partnership Agreement between the SAAF National Defense University and the U.S. National Defense University, which the NESAC Center implements.

Speakers and participants discussed topics including the importance of carefully choosing case studies for classes and examples of historic best practices, and applying lessons learned in military education. Lectures presented theories of andragogy, including discussions on how to facilitate comfortable, student-focused classroom environments, as well as developing a classroom culture of collaboration and participation. Speakers and participants also discussed how to address challenges instructors face in assessing students and designing effective coursework.

A notable highlight of the workshop was a site visit to Baltimore, MD’s Fort McHenry, where a crucial battle in the War of 1812 inspired “The Star Spangled Banner”. Professor David DesRoches, who led the tour of the Fort, used the location’s distinctive history to enliven insights on military planning and coordination.



LEVANT PROGRAMS

WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION AND THE MIDDLE EAST

In one of the more volatile regions of the world, many NESAs countries have historically been plagued by disputes over religion, culture, land, and water—risks made all the acute by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) across the region.

NESA region leaders from military, civilian government, and civil society concerned about the use of these terrible tools of modern warfare convened in Geneva, Switzerland 17-18 April, 2018 for a sensitive workshop co-hosted by NESA and the Geneva Center for Security Policy (GCSP). NESA's Academic Dean Dr. **Roger Kangas** and NESA Professor Dr. **Gawdat Bahgat** led discussions, which focused on the forces driving proliferation across the region, prospects for preventing or reversing the spread of WMD, peaceful nuclear power, terrorism and WMD, chemical and biological weapons, and the role of external powers in non-proliferation efforts.

LEBANESE ARMED FORCES SEMINAR

Seven years ago, a peaceful uprising against Syrian President Bashar Al Assad escalated into a full-scale war now among the century's deadliest. Along the way, the the war has produced a humanitarian catastrophe leaving 350,000 people dead, created the world's worst refugee crisis since World War II, enabled the expansion of ISIS networks, and ensnared external powers. The longer Syria's conflict goes on, the more immediately destabilizing it will be for its southern neighbor Lebanon.



To help Lebanon confront these challenges, NESAs hosted a Seminar designed for senior-level delegates from the Lebanese Armed Forces Staff College (LAFSC), “Syria and the Greater Middle East: 2020 and Beyond”, 2-13 April, 2018. The seminar was directed by NESAs Professor Dr. **Jennifer Jefferis** and focused on the Syrian War’s implications for Lebanon, as well as opportunities to help wind down the conflict. The seminar also explored key power dynamics and power

struggles helping drive the war, Iran’s role, the Iran-Saudi Arabia rivalry, the agendas of leading powers in the MENA region, the U.S.-Russo relationship, and rebuilding in a post-war Syria.

The seminar was attended by 24 senior Lebanese field grade and general officers, and some officers from Egypt and Kuwait. Guest lecturers included Dr. Mara Karlin, Non-Resident Senior Fellow at Brookings; Mr. James Sindler, National Security Council Director for Lebanon; and Ms. Mona Yacoubian, the United States Institute of Peace’s Senior Advisor for Syria and the Middle East.

Participants visited Capitol Hill and the U.S. Agency for International Aid for further discussions on American policymaking, U.S. refugee policies, and global U.S. aid efforts. Following the NESAs Seminar, participants engaged stakeholders at Quantico and the NATO Allied Command Transformation.

SOUTH ASIA PROGRAMS

AFGHANISTAN BUILDING AND SUSTAINING GOVERNMENT CAPACITY WORKSHOPS

As a key component of NESAs support of strong diplomatic and defense ties with a democratic, well-governed Afghanistan, NESAs conducts two “Afghanistan Building and Sustaining Government Capacity” Workshops each FY. The workshops focus on developing and implementing whole-of-government approaches towards resolving Afghanistan’s regional and sub-regional issues, and instructs participants in topics like policy making and tradecraft, best practices in catalyzing economic development, civil-military relations, and national security and international communications.

The workshops represent strong pillars in the U.S.-Afghan relationship, usually graduate over 50 participants per course, and have featured involvement--including in guest speaker roles--from Afghan political VIPs like President Ashraf Ghani, former National Security Advisor Hanif Atmar, and representatives from the Afghan Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

NESA’s two 2018 Afghanistan-focused Government and Capacity Workshops were conducted 16-19 December, 2017 and 24-27 March, 2018 at the U.S. Embassy, Kabul, Afghanistan. Both were directed by NESAs Professor **John Wood**, with support from faculty members Professor **Brianne Todd** and Professor and former Interior Minister of Afghanistan **Ali Jalali**.



PAKISTAN/AFGHANISTAN CONFIDENCE BUILDING SEMINAR

Continuing a unique dialogue started by the NESACenter, Professor **John Wood** led FY18's Afghanistan-Pakistan Confidence Building Seminar 22 January - 2 February, 2018 at the National Defense University. Held annually, NESACenter's Pakistan/Afghanistan Confidence Building Seminars facilitate the extremely rare opportunity for Afghan and Pakistani officials to cooperate on key regional security issues, normalizing relations and instilling confidence.

The Seminar series is exclusive to NESACenter and represents one of few opportunities for high-level Afghan and Pakistani officials to interact outside state channels, allowing them to exchange information and exercise transparency in discussions on military and political activities, regulated by Chatham House rules of non-attribution.

15 senior military and government officials from Afghanistan and Pakistan attended the critical two-week conversation, during which participants heard from prominent Middle East and South Asia experts on topics including narco-trafficking, India's ambitions in South Asia, refugee and migration issues, customs and border security, and Russian assertiveness in Central Asia.

Professor Wood's guest speakers included notable senior officials from the U.S. Defense and State Departments, and Congressional lawmakers. Speakers included Ambassador John W. Limbert, former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Iran in the State Department's Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs; Mr. Vikram Singh, Center for American Progress Fellow; and Mr. Michael Fisher, former Chief of U.S. Border Patrol.



On the Seminar's concluding day, participants--divided into mixed Afghan/Pakistani teams--were tasked with completing a white paper exercise addressing a security issue along their shared border. Each team presented their policy recommendations to a panel including NESACenter faculty and senior-level diplomatic and defense figures from the Afghan and Pakistani Embassies.

MARITIME STRATEGIC FORUM

In the Indo-Pacific, the overall picture is one of flux: Chinese military maneuvers threaten the U.S.-maintained security environment, while India's projection of a cultural-historic order seeks common cause with littoral states at China's expense.

To discuss challenges in these volatile waters, NESAs—in cooperation with the Africa Center for Strategic Studies and the Daniel K. Inouye Asia Pacific Center for Security Studies—conducted the 2018 Strategic Forum from 13-16 August in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates. Focusing on the issue of Maritime Security in the Western Indian Ocean, the program brought 37 participants together to discuss the evolving strategic environment on the waters of the Indian Ocean. Participants hailed from Eastern Africa, South Asia, the Asia Pacific, the Middle East, Europe, and North America. The international participants included military officers, diplomats, subject matter experts, and international organization representatives, while the United States participants included representatives from the Pacific Fleet, Naval Forces African Command, Naval Forces Central Command, African Command J5, State Department, and the DAO US Embassy Abu Dhabi.



The event included a welcome reception and alumni reunion in the St. Regis Hotel, Abu Dhabi, presided over by Steven Bondy, Charge d'Affaires of the United States Embassy, and COL David Lamm, NESAs Deputy Director. Over fifty individuals attended the reception, which also served as a way to reconnect with alumni

and as a means to introduce the forum's participants to one another. **Jeffrey Payne**, NESAs Manager of Academic Affairs, acted as the event's course director, while NESAs faculty were represented by Dr. **Gawdat Bahgat**.

CENTRAL ASIA PROGRAMS

SILK ROAD FUTURE LEADERS SEMINAR

The NESACenter is proud to provide the knowledge, mentorship and professional socialization to help promising young people from partner countries become the change makers their region needs. From 2-6 April, 2018, NESACentered its annual “Silk Road Future Leaders Seminar” at the National Defense University. The 2018 iteration was led by NESACenter Professor **Brianne Todd** and was attended by 20 emerging leaders from 10 NESACenter countries in South and Central Asia. Focusing on the theme “Statecraft and Decision-Making in the 21st Century.” Professor Todd led discussions on diplomacy and leadership, the art of negotiation, strategic communications, ethics in decision-making, and explored challenges that participants themselves would face in their roles as future policy practitioners in their home countries.

Guest speakers included former U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Thomas Pickering and former Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for South and Central Asian Affairs Richard E. Hoagland, while NESACenter Director General (ret.) **Terry Wolff** lectured on the D-ISIS fight, and made recommendations regarding policy formulation and state-building in post-conflict environments. Participants also engaged in roundtable talks with Congressional staffers on Capitol Hill.



CENTRAL ASIA AFGHANISTAN SECURITY EXECUTIVE SEMINAR



From August 20-24, the NESAC Center hosted its annual Central Asia-Afghanistan Security Executive Seminar, which is designed for senior experts from Central Asia and Afghanistan. This year's seminar focused on the theme, "The Life Cycle of a Foreign Terrorist Fighter," and analyzed aspects of the evolution from radicalization to violent extremism. Professor **Brianne Todd** led the discussions, and 22 military officers and government officials from Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan participated.

The seminar was designed to examine the ways in which policymakers and practitioners from Central Asia and Afghanistan can more effectively address the foreign and domestic aspects of violent extremism. To that end, participants "mapped" the extremist threat in Central Asia and Afghanistan, dissected the narratives of jihadist recruiters, and debated how regional governments can best address the challenges of former ISIS fighters returning to their home countries, among other activities. Subject matter experts from organizations including the Voice of America, the United States Institute of Peace, the Center for Strategic and International Studies, and the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START) provided additional insights to further these critical discussions.

During their time in Washington, program participants visited the U.S. Capitol and the White House and attended a formal reception at which Lieutenant General (ret.) Terry Wolff, the NESAC Center Director and Deputy Special Presidential Envoy for the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL, engaged with participants and made remarks on the Counter ISIL mission.

NESA PUBLICATIONS

Dr. Roger Kangas

LEGAL REFORM IN CENTRAL ASIA



Contribution, "Central Asia in the Era of Sovereignty"

Read: <https://rowman.com/isbn/9781498572675/central-asia-in-the-era-of-sovereignty-the-return-of-tamerlane>

Dr. Gawdat Bahgat

THE BREWING WAR BETWEEN IRAN AND ISRAEL



For Middle East Policy Council

Read: <http://www.mepc.org/journal/brewing-war-between-iran-and-israel-strategic-implications>

Professor David Des Roches

THE GCC CRISIS AT ONE YEAR

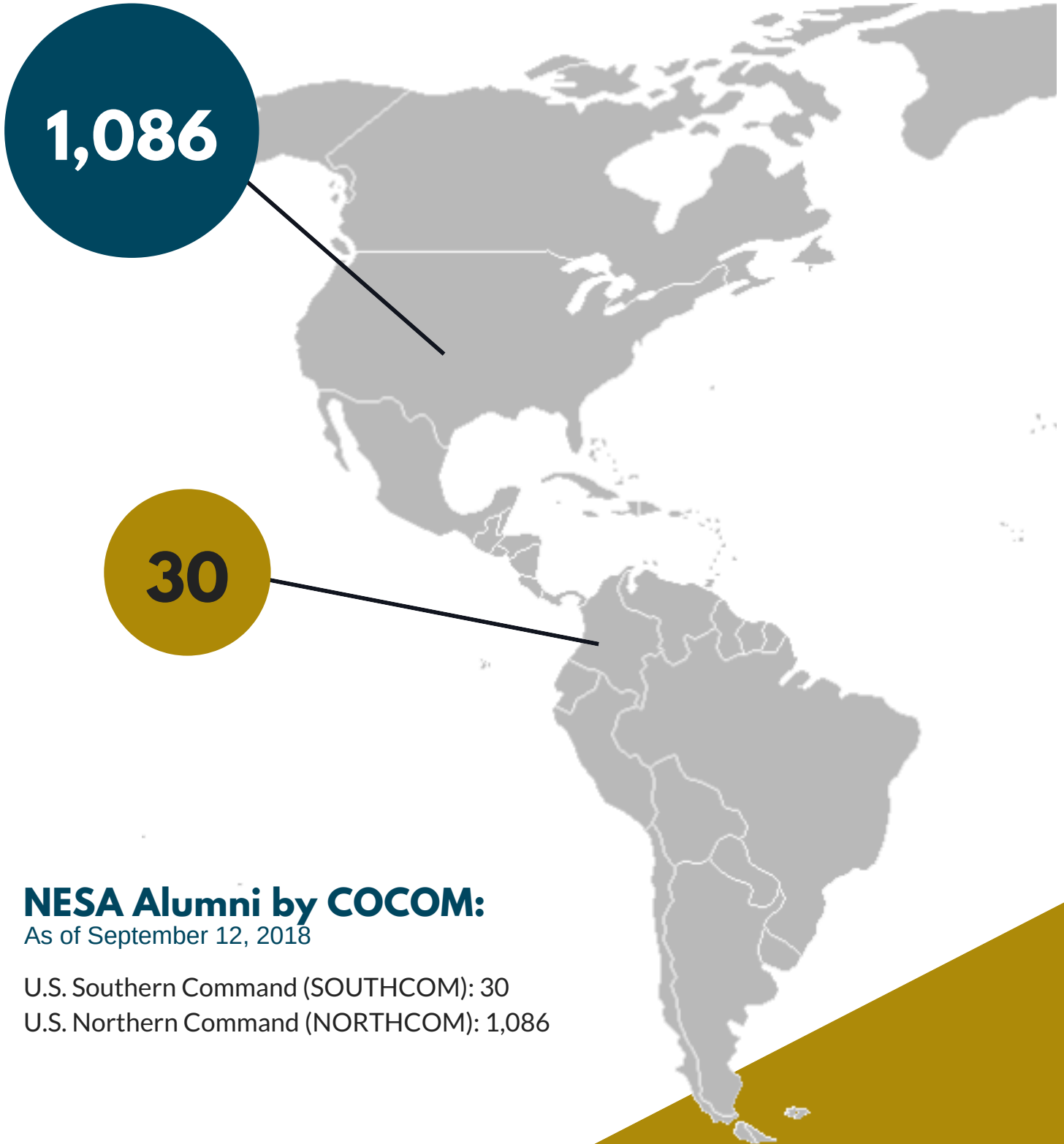


Contribution for Arab Center Washington D.C.

Read: http://arabcenterdc.org/policy_analyses/the-gcc-crisis-at-one-year-stalemate-becomes-new-reality/

In FY18, NESA alumni published works through print and online-based outlets including the Middle East Institute, South Asian Voices, and Al Jazeera.

GLOBAL IMPACT

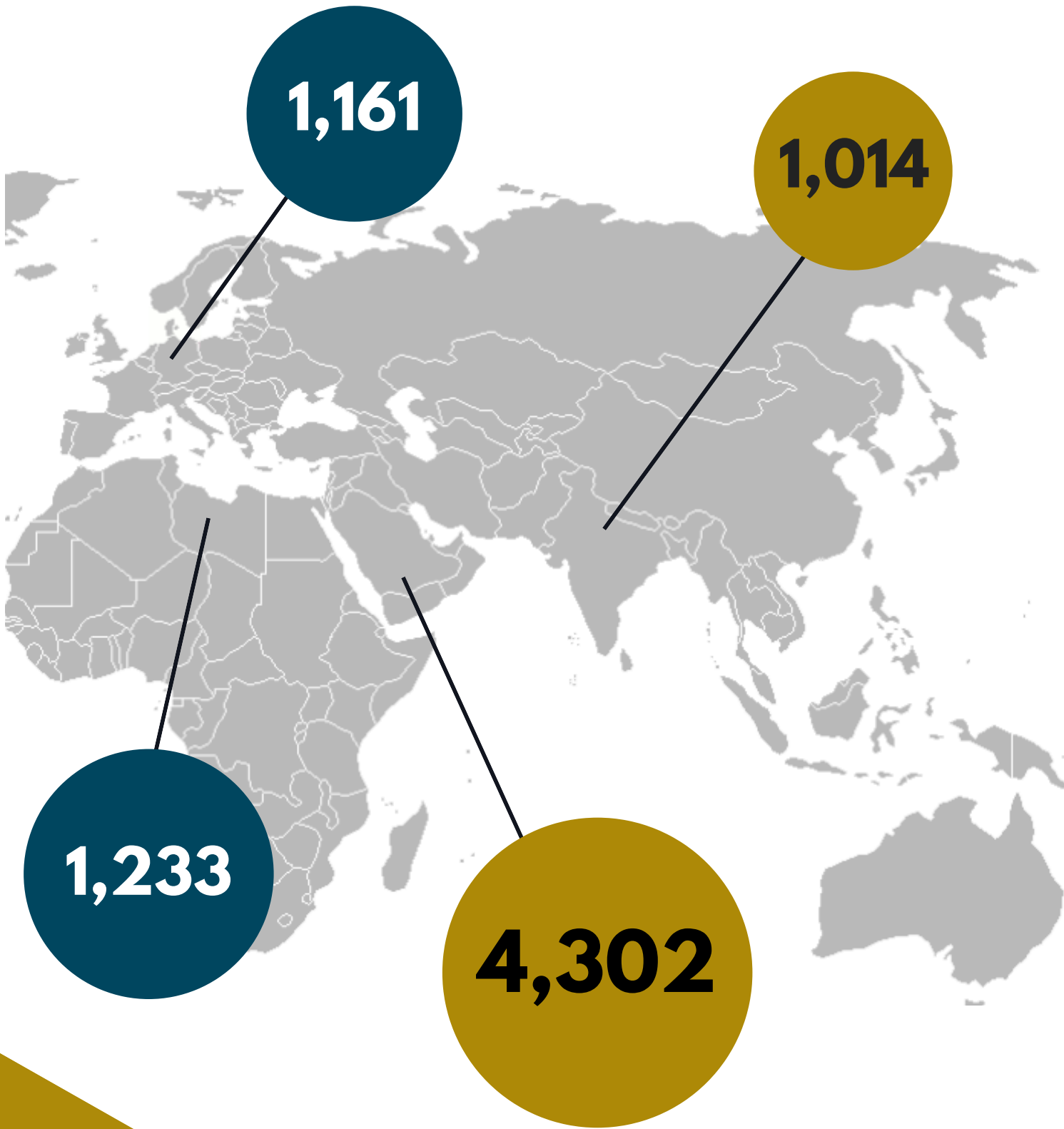


NESA Alumni by COCOM:

As of September 12, 2018

U.S. Southern Command (SOUTHCOM): 30

U.S. Northern Command (NORTHCOM): 1,086



U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM): 1,233
U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM): 4,302
U.S. Indo-Pacific Command (INDOPACOM):
1,014
U.S. European Command (EUCOM): 1,161

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